

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966
AD5 Taiwan Hokkien
Formosa AD1

THE SETTING

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With the advent of the Japanese in 1895, Lukang very soon lost its importance as a port, for Japan's plans for the colonization of Taiwan did not include maintaining Lukang as a trade and immigration center. The Japanese set about cutting off the movement of people and goods between Taiwan and the mainland, and, to divert the colony's trade from China to Japan, they built the port of Keelung in northern Taiwan (Barclay, 1954b:12, 18-42). The demise of Lukang both as a port and as a major urban center was hastened by the silting up of the harbor, which had begun even before the coming of the Japanese. As a result of Japanese indifference to Lukang as a port, the harbor soon became unusable.

The final blow by which the Japanese doomed Lukang's importance was the routing of the extensive west coast railroad system far from Lukang. The city could then neither be maintained as a major market town nor as a point of trans-shipment for the area's produce. Its decline as an urban center and as an influence on the surrounding area was reflected in an accompanying population decrease from one hundred thousand in the late eighteenth century to fifty-one thousand in 1954 (*Women in Lukang Chen*, 1954). The decrease took place despite the high rate of population growth in the rest of Taiwan.

Today, Lukang stands several miles from the sea, a city much diminished in size and importance. It offers little economic opportunity for its inhabitants, and despite some light industry, few village people are employed there. Nevertheless, although it is now a small, out-of-the-way city, it offers nearby villagers a convenient local marketplace and a center for some entertainment. Most important, it still functions as a religious center. From the earliest times the Chinese immigrants brought their gods with them from the mainland to Taiwan. These gods and goddesses, such as Matsu, became firmly established as important deities in Taiwan; the Matsu temple in Lukang is believed by the people of the area to be the oldest or second oldest Matsu temple on the island. For this reason Lukang is still one of the most important focal points for the religious pilgrimages of those who maintain loyalty to the Goddess Matsu.

The historical picture of this area at the time of the late Ch'ing dynasty comes from data furnished by older or better educated residents of the area and several local Chinese and Japanese gazetteers.³ These various sources were used, wherever possible, to corroborate one another. The sources note that in the late nineteenth century the area was sparsely populated and that its inhabitants lived in constant fear of bandits. Up to the early part of the twentieth century dry farming produced most of the staples grown, since there was only a very limited system of irrigation. Crops like wheat, soybeans, sorghum, sweet potatoes, peanuts, a plant used to make dye for cloth, and broom grass were

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the main products. Rice growing played little part in the economy. The almost total lack of irrigation, presumably combined with a high mortality rate, prevented any rapid increase in population. There were not even enough people to exploit the land fully.

The present area of Hsin Hsing was at that time the site of only a few scattered households. The inhabitants were so few and so weak, and the bandits so many and so strong, that Hsin Hsing and eleven nearby villages formed a mutual protection association. When a village was attacked by bandits, it sounded large gongs as an alarm signal; the signal was relayed from village to village, and the able-bodied men rushed to the aid of the community under attack. The associated villages still maintain an informal organization today, though its function is now the production of a joint annual religious procession (which will be discussed in Chapter 8).

The coming of the Japanese to Taiwan had major repercussions not only for Lukang but for the Hsin Hsing village area generally. Once their rule was established on the island, the Japanese moved quickly to bring about law and order by suppressing the bandits. They eliminated the lawless element from the countryside and brought new security to the village people.

The Japanese also took in hand the extreme complexities of a tri-level land tenure system of landlords, tenants, and subtenants. (See details in Chapter 4.) In order to establish clear property rights and increase the efficiency of tax assessment and collection, the Japanese carried out extensive land surveys from about 1898. In 1905 the "Land Investigation Regulations" were promulgated; they resulted in a greatly simplified land tenure structure which included only landlords and tenants. This basic system is still in force today. Even in more recent years, although the Land Reform Program of the Chinese Nationalist government modified the internal content of the land tenure structure, its form has remained roughly the same.

At the same time, the Japanese gradually extended the irrigation system to serve much larger areas (see *Pu Yen Chuang Yen Ke Chih*)⁴ as part of their effort to integrate the colonial area of Taiwan into the Japanese economy. The development of a major irrigation system enabled the agricultural population to expand its rice production greatly, and this rice ultimately became its major export to the Japanese homeland (Barclay, 1954b:18-42).⁵

The expansion of the irrigation system, accompanied by a greater emphasis on agriculture in the area, occurred at about the time that the main impact of the closing of the port of Lukang began to affect the villagers, who thus lost the opportunity to supplement their livelihood by working in the port. The increased irrigation meant that wet-rice could be planted profitably. Wet-rice production demands a

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deified because of her commendable deeds. Originally, she was the protectress of seafarers, and her statue was brought from the mainland by the earliest Chinese immigrants to Taiwan. However, over the years the residents of the Hsin Hsing area have endowed Matsu with considerably greater talents, and today she is considered capable of doing many things—curing the sick, aiding in the production of a boy child, bringing rain when it is needed, and even helping someone win the National Lottery. The villagers tell a story about a man from a village in the area who went to the Lukang Matsu temple and prayed for success in the lottery. When he did not win, he returned to the temple and with a sword lopped off one of Matsu's ears. [539]

Middle-aged village women often discuss seriously Matsu's magnificent feats. One day several women told "how, several years earlier, Matsu had saved some boys from drowning in the Strait of Formosa just off Lukang. When a sudden storm came up, the boys' boat sank and they were about to drown when Matsu came and saved them." The women debated the question of just how Matsu had accomplished this, one saying that the goddess had provided a bridge for them to get back to shore and another that the goddess had furnished another boat and pulled them ashore. [796 539]

Numerous other Taiwanese also credit Matsu with enormous powers,² and each year many people from far-off villages and even cities travel to Lukang in long processions by hired trucks, bicycles, pedicabs, sedan chairs, and on foot to worship Matsu on her birthday. Some Hsin Hsing villagers also go to Lukang to worship Matsu on this day, but most worship her at home because they are too busy to travel to Lukang. However, Lukang is considered a very exciting place when it is filled with the tens of thousands of people who have come to worship Matsu, and many villagers, especially young people and women, go there in the evening to watch the festivities. [796 796]

In addition to the recognition which is accorded Matsu on her birthday, for at least the last forty years Hsin Hsing and eleven other villages in the area have held a joint procession each year to worship Matsu some weeks after her birthday. About this time of the year, when the irrigation water is running low in the fields of Hsin Hsing and two neighboring villages of the other eleven, the occasion is taken to ask Matsu to bring much-needed rains for the rice crop. As far back as the late 1800's, these same twelve villages were allied together to provide mutual defense against the many bandits who then ravaged the area. While the necessity for such defense was eliminated soon after the arrival of the Japanese, the cooperative relationship between these villages has been continued through the annual Matsu procession. The Matsu procession, then, still provides an occasion which brings the people together, not only the residents of a single village, but those of many villages. In the Hsin Hsing area it is the only time [796 796 788 175 628 100 648 579 628 178]

175 example, was the outcome of years of bloody fighting between settlers from Chianchou and Changchou, the prize in this case being domination of the port facilities and trade with the mainland. To what extent the early residents of Chichou became involved in these struggles we cannot now say, but that they did become involved is almost certain. Again and again fighting which began in Taipei flared into major armed conflicts which rapidly spread over the countryside, often disturbing the peace of cities as far away as the southern end of the island. It is perhaps significant to note that it was not until the early 1920's that the first Changchou woman married into Hsiachichou and that even today she is stigmatized with the name Chang-ah. And finally, aside from the threat posed by the aborigines and the danger of war with other Chinese, the early settlers of Chichou were plagued with bandits.

• [57] As late as 1870 the bandits of the Hsulin area were so powerful as to be able to resist all official interference. According to the missionary George MacKay, the subprefect and his retinue narrowly escaped death in this area in 1873, and at that time it was apparently not uncommon for the bandits of the area "to form a company and march into the town, singing boastfully, with a wild kind of yell ... 'You trust the mandarins; we trust the mountains.'"¹

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613 Considering these various external threats, it is not surprising that for a long time the early inhabitants of Chichou united to form a single corporate lineage, a fact we can infer from the existence of a

¹ George L. MacKay, From Far Formosa, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895), p. 160.

62) general story.

- Other families continued to migrate to Sanlei and to the other villages in the area. By no later than 1880, the village reached a population of slightly over forty families and it seemed to remain about that size until
- 579 after the Restoration. In the nearby mountains, some 11 families took up banditry which continued into the twentieth century. A favorite crime was kidnapping for ransom. The bandits were able to make temporary liaisons with the aborigines. Some current villagers are descendants of bandits and still possess the consequent stigma.
- [582] Several people told me that one of the reasons for preferring to bring in brides from the south was they were less likely to have descended from bandits. One powerful and influential man in the 11 is the son of the last bandit chief.

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579 The arrival of the Japanese at first had little effect on the village for the area was remote and there was only one narrow foot path from the village in the direction of Hsin Tien. The continuing activities of the bandits were not tolerated by the Japanese. In 1905, a punitive expedition was sent into the mountains. This force greatly frightened villagers and many fled and hid in the mountains. Unfortunately, it was difficult to distinguish between bandit and farmer and about 15 or 16 Sanlei villagers were killed and about one third of the

648 village homes were destroyed. Similar results obtained
w 579 in the other villages in Talei Li. This event was within
the memory of older informants who were quite incensed
about the destruction of innocents. On other occasions,
there were no doubts that the villagers had cooperated
with the bandits, supplied recruits, and benefited finan-
cially from their activities.

648 Soon after the above punitive expedition, a police
177 station was established in the village temple and it was
[625] periodically staffed for irregular periods until the late
thirties with a detachment of two or three men. It was
a branch of a more important and permanent station in
Pouti which, in turn, was a branch of that in Hsin Tien
(see Figure 1 for relative locations).

The destruction of village homes did not mark an
auspicious beginning for the occupation. The Japanese
[778] employed other oppressive measures as well. As part of
[776] a Japanization process, they destroyed ancestral tablets
and forced villagers to worship Japanese Shinto gods. It
became necessary to learn Japanese in order to conduct
business with the government. The policemen carried long
[46] sticks and beat transgressors on the spot. They also
[653] impressed village men into labor battalions for road and
sanitation work. There was great resentment over corvee
work at locations not in the immediate village area.
[823] Nevertheless, these activities did not destroy positive